The problem-introduction

Firstly, what is racial harmony? Well, generally, racial harmony refers to a group of people of different races or nationalities working, playing and living together harmoniously and in peace without serious conflicts. Generally, racial harmony means people of a certain race or nationality treat people from different races of nationalities the same way that they would treat people of the same race as themselves.

However, racial harmony has been a perpetual problem in many parts of the world throughout history and even today. Millions of people have been massacred just because they were of a certain race, for example, the genocide of the Jews during the Holocaust, and just two years ago, on the 3rd of December 2009, Asian high school students were being physically assaulted and harassed by fellow students in South Philadelphia High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Thus, the real world problem that our group is trying to solve would be the failure of integration of the different racial groups in different countries around the world such as Britain, France and Germany. We will attempt to solve these problems by suggesting some ideas that the general public of countries that are facing problems with racial integration help themselves integrate into the community so that a certain degree of racial harmony can be achieved.

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/10/16/philly.school.asian.american.attacks/index.html>

Case studies

The three case studies that we will be examining are; Britain, Germany and France. We will be examining how these countries have failed in their attempt to integrate the people of different racial groups together. The main cause of the failure of integration would be the large number of Muslim immigrants into the three European countries. This has led to uncertainty within the government as to what they are supposed to do; should the government force the new immigrants to conform to their laws which may lack understanding of the immigrants’ religion, or should the government have a “hands-off” approach and allow the immigrants to make their own laws to suit themselves? We will first look at the three countries individually and examine the common factors which led to the failure of multiculturalism in those countries.

## Britain

British Prime Minister David Cameron has said that multiculturalism has failed in Britain and his country is responsible for fostering Islam extremism. Cameron said “Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values.” Cameron continued “So, when a white person holds objectionable views, racist views for instance, we rightly condemn them. But when equally unacceptable views or practices come from someone who is not white, we have been too cautious, frankly -– frankly, even fearful –- to stand up to them….”  What this has done is that it has left Muslim youths in Britain feeling rootless and thus they turn to radical Islam. This “hands-off” approach has also led to racial enclaves in Britain where people of a certain racial group form an enclave in a part of Britain and live there. This shows the failure of Britain in its attempt to integrate its people.

<http://www.hudson-ny.org/1869/british-multiculturalism-failure>

## Germany

Germany has been suffering from a problem of multiculturalism resulting from a stream of Muslim immigrants moving and settling in Germany permanently. German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has addressed her own party, the Christian Democratic Union, that Germany’s attempts to construct a peaceful and multicultural society had “utterly failed,” in her words. This is a result of the large population of Muslim immigrants that now compose the German population. The situation in Germany is one of such: the newly-immigrated Muslims are building their own society, rather than adopting the one Germany possessed; and therefore causing a lack of integration between the native Germans and the Muslims. As there is no limit for the number of Muslims entering the country, the Muslim society continues to grow at an almost unstoppable pace, resulting between tension between the Muslims and the rest of Germany.

Criticism of multiculturalism. (2011). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved March 19, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_multiculturalism>

Kern, S. (2011, February 10). *The failure of British multiculturalism*. Retrieved from <http://www.hudson-ny.org/1869/british-multiculturalism-failure>

## France Case Study

France is currently trying to create a middle ground between the religious Muslim laws, upheld by over six million Muslims in France, and the conventional laws upheld by ordinary French citizens. The Muslims have been complaining about the lack of Muslim awareness in French laws, especially after the new ruling in France which banned the use of face-covering veils that Muslims women find religiously upholding. However, the French, especially the government, insist that the Muslims should integrate into French culture and laws instead of trying to make new ones that suit themselves solely. The French president, Nicholas Sarkozy, has deemed multiculturalism a failure, and has mentioned clearly to the Muslim community in France that he did not want citizens of France who would not agree to “melt into a single community.” He has also denounced the Muslim habit of praying on the streets. There has also been a sharp increase in the number of Muslim riots in France; many Muslim districts have been cordoned off by the police as unsafe for citizens.

Multiculturalism. (2011). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved March 19, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism>

Kern, S. (2011, March 17). *Debate heats up over Muslims in France*. Retrieved from <http://www.hudson-ny.org/1969/muslims-in-france>

## Analysis

As we can see, Germany and Britain have adopted a “hands-off” approach towards the Muslim immigrants, which meant that the Muslims were creating their own societies within these countries and not conforming to the established laws in Germany and Britain. France however, is trying to force the Muslims to conform to their laws by for example, banning the face-covering veils that some Muslim women wear. However, the Muslims are complaining about the lack of Muslim awareness in French laws. We find that the government in these three countries should try to reach a balance between being aware of Muslims while making laws, while at the same time ensuring that the Muslims conform to these laws. The government should also try to be impartial while making decisions, for example in Britain, the government is hesitant about punishing Muslims as they worry it may cause anti-British feelings. However, we feel that the only way to get past this is if every race is treated equally by the government. This is because if the government is hesitant about punishing a certain race, that race will feel that it has “special rights” and the other races will feel that the government is unfair and this might lead to tensions between the races. This tension will cause the different races to form enclaves in different parts of the country which will lead to a lack of integration between different races, which is also defined as the failure of Multiculturalism. Thus, we feel that the government should not be afraid that the Muslim races will response as if the Muslims become accustomed to the fact that they do not have special rights, they will not harbor any feelings of resentment towards the government. This will allow for better integration of the different racial groups within the country and after some time, a degree of racial harmony can be achieved.

The singapore story – introduction

Why does Singapore need racial harmony? First of all, Singapore has four main races, Chinese, Indian, Malay and Eurasian. Thus, it is critical that these different racial groups can live together in harmony as Singapore is a small country; we do not have natural resources such as oil or coal, Singapore has to buy its water from neighboring countries such as Malaysia, the sand that is used for construction work in Singapore is imported from Indonesia and other countries. Thus, the biggest asset of Singapore would be its manpower. This is why it is so important for Singapore to have racial harmony, because with racial harmony, Singapore is able to develop and progress effectively. With racial harmony, the government does not have to deal with racial conflict or other racial issues; our government will then be able to focus more on other things that help to improve Singapore economically or socially. This is why Singapore, although being such a small country, is able to grow and sustain itself effectively.

History-Maria hertogh

History, Racial Riots Maria Hertogh

Maria Bertha Hertogh was born on the 24th of March, 1937, and was the focus of the racial riots in Singapore in December 1950. Her mother, Adeline Hertogh gave Maria to a family friend, Aminah bte Mohammad, on the 15th of November 1942 as her father was a prisoner of war and her mother could not cope with the stress of raising another child. Aminah and Maria then moved to Jakarta, then Bandung and finally went to Terengganu, Malaysia. Maria then grew up in Aminah’s hometown where she studied at Chukai Malay Girls’ School and became a Muslim.

When Maria’s parents had been united after the war, they began searching for Maria. Maria’s parents lodged a request with Dutch officials to locate their daughter. One of the Dutch officials spotted Maria at a school competition and alerted the authorities. Aminah was requested to bring Maria to Singapore to discuss the issue of Maria’s custody with the Dutch Consul – General who was in Singapore. A custody battle then ensued over Maria in Court.

Custody of Maria was initially given to Aminah. Within four days of the ruling, on 1st of August 1950, Maria was married off to Mansoor Adabi, a 22-year-old teacher at a Government School. Maria’s mother, Adeline then appealed to the court for custody over Maria and raised the issue of Maria’s marriage as Maria was only thirteen at the time. On the 2nd of December 1950, custody of Maria was given to Adeline Hertogh who brought her to Amsterdam, Netherlands.

A few days after custody of Maria was given to Adeline, Aminah appealed for the custody of Maria again. However, the court threw out the appeal within five minutes of the hearing. The riots were sparked off over the custodial ruling as the Muslims in Singapore felt that the colonial legal system was biased against Muslims. In total, 18 people were killed after the riots ended on the 13th of December.

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Hertogh_riots>

<http://infopedia.nl.sg/articles/SIP_508_2004-12-23.html>

<http://infopedia.nl.sg/articles/SIP_83_2005-02-02.html>

History

1964 Race Riots in Singapore

When Singapore merged with the Federation of Malaysia, many among the small Malay minority expected that they would also benefit from the special rights for Malays enshrined in the 1957 Federation of Malaya Constitution. There was deep resentment when it became apparent that this was never part of the agreement for merger and would never be agreed upon by any government of Singapore.  
  
**19 July 1964** : More than 1,000 Malay non-political leaders from 101 organisations met Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore and Encik Othman Wok, the Minister for Social Affairs to clarify the issue of the special rights for Malays.  
  
At the meeting, Mr Lee promised that while every effort would be made by the government to train Malays for top positions in competition with non-Malays, the government would neither allow a quota system for jobs nor special licences and land reservations for Malays. He reiterated that all Singaporean citizens had equal rights, regardless of race.  
  
Meanwhile, the Straits Times of 21 July 1964 reported that more than 25,000 Muslims in Singapore would participate in a giant rally at the Padang on the following day to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Muhammad. Celebrations would also be held in Kuala Lumpur and in towns throughout Malaysia.  
  
**20 July 1964** : In response to Mr Lee, the 23-man Singapore UMNO Action Committee, a political organisation which claimed to speak for all Singapore Malays, called on him to use his time in curbing the secret society menace instead of splitting the Malay community. The Action Committee was headed by UMNO State leader, Senator Ahmad Haji Taff who claimed that the meeting was an insult to the Malays. He defended his Action Committee against accusations of communalism by the Premier, by counter-charging that Mr Lee himself was trying to break the harmony and good relations between Malays and Chinese. He emphasised, "Our campaign has been directed solely at Mr Lee Kuan Yew and his Government for not implementing the special rights clause in the Constitution - not campaign against the Chinese."  
  
On the **21st of July, 1964**, around 25,000 Malays gathered at the Pandang, Singapore to celebrate the Muslim prophet Muhammad’s birthday. After Prophet Muhammad’s speech, the procession went on to Geylang. Along the way, a policeman asked a dispersed group to re-join the main procession. Instead of obeying the orders, the group attacked the policeman. This incident led to a race riot after a group of Malays attacked ethnic Chinese-Malay passer-by and spectators. In the first day of rioting, four people were killed and 178 people were injured. The government arrested about 3,000 people.

**2 September 1964** : Racial tensions exploded once again when a Malay trishaw rider was stabbed to death at night. Rioting erupted again and continued for another five days with 12 people killed, 109 injured and over 1,200 people arrested for rioting and curfew-breaking. The curfew was lifted on 11 September when the situation returned to normal.

There have been many reasons cited for the riots; the Malaysia Deputy Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak blamed ethnic Indonesian and Communist provocateurs. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and several observers blamed the riots on the ultra-nationalist faction in United Malays National Organization (UMNO). The riots occurred when the People’s Action Party (PAP) based in Singapore and the UMNO relations were severely strained as the PAP challenged the UMNO during the 1964 Malaysia federal election. This led to racial tensions between the Malays and the Chinese.

Racial harmony day is now celebrated in Singapore on the 21st of July every year to commemorate the 1964 race riots, and to remind Singaporeans the importance of racial harmony.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1964_race_riots_in_Singapore>

<http://infopedia.nl.sg/articles/SIP_45_2005-01-06.html>

history analysis

As you can see from the above cases, racial harmony is volatile and can be easily disrupted by small triggers such as the Maria Hertogh case where the ruling of a court sparked off racial conflict. Even though it takes a huge government effort to help build up racial harmony, such as implementing changes in the education system to help stabilise racial harmony and the Ethinic Integration Policy, which will be explained in greater detail further on, racial harmony can still be disrupted as it is not given that racial harmony will always be stable.

Thus, we should not take racial harmony for granted and should treasure it. Especially in the Singapore context, where all the races are represented quite equally; as there are four main different races being crammed into a small island that is Singapore, there is bound to be contact between the different racial groups. All of these show that racial harmony should be respected and treasured by Singaporeans.

Also, if there is constant racial conflict between the four main racial groups, Singapore’s government would have to spend a lot of its manpower to prevent racial conflict, Singapore would then be unable to progress and develop effectively to the metropolis that it is today.